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ABSTRACT

This final report describes the activities, accomplishments, and outcomes of a three-year project, Preparing Advanced Collaborative Teams, of the College of William and Mary (Virginia) to train education professionals to plan, deliver, and evaluate programs for students with disabilities in inclusive settings. The project incorporated four key features: (1) a program design stressing interdisciplinary collaboration; (2) systematic development of competencies for both direct and indirect service delivery; (3) redefinition of a school-based service delivery model for students with disabilities; and (4) an induction program to support the resource/collaborating teachers in their new roles. A total of 38 master's degree students, 34 building-level administrators, and 38 colleague teachers participated in project activities. The report details the project's achievements for each of its four main objectives, which were to: recruit highly qualified participants; prepare participants in inclusive education programming; monitor participant progress; and disseminate information. Budget information is summarized. (DB)

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ED 457 660

Preparing Advanced Collaborative Teams (PACT) Final Grant Performance Report January 1, 1997-December 21, 1999

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U.S. Department of Education
Final Grant Performance Report

I. COVER SHEET

1. Performance Reporting Period – Final Report: 01/01/97 – 12/31/99

2. PR/Award No. (Block 5 on Grant Award Notification): H029G60208

3. Project Title: Preparing Advanced Collaborative Teams (PACT)

4. Recipient Information:
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6. Cumulative Expenditures: $419,364.00

7. Annual Certification(s) of IRB Approval:
Yes ___ No __X__

II. PROJECT SUMMARY

The Preparing Advanced Collaborative Teams (PACT) project was designed and implemented to address the need for well-qualified teachers able to collaborate with families and other professionals to help students with disabilities succeed in inclusive educational environments. The PACT project faculty and staff (a) recruited highly qualified participants: (b) prepared these education professionals to plan, deliver, and evaluate programs for students with disabilities in more inclusive settings; (c) monitored participant progress and achievement of project objectives; and (d) disseminated information regarding the PACT Project. To accomplish these objectives, specific competencies, strategies, and a management plan were identified and served as the foundation for this Master's degree program.

To ensure the development of critical skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enabled PACT Master's students and members of their local PACT teams (i.e., colleague teachers and building administrators) to function successfully in their roles, project faculty designed a program that incorporated four key features: (a) a program design that actualized the School of Education, College of William and Mary's philosophical commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration; (b) systematic development of competencies for both direct and indirect service delivery; (c) redefinition of a school-based service delivery model for students with disabilities; and (d) an induction program to support the resource/collaborating teachers in their new roles. Admitted students recruited one colleague teacher and one administrator in their schools to serve as members of their local PACT teams. These three professionals participated in a summer institute and training sessions, and met regularly to plan and evaluate progress in their schools. As they completed their Master's degrees, PACT students received tuition waivers, ongoing support, field supervision over a two-year period, and other professional development opportunities.

Advanced training for PACT students and local team members facilitated professional development, collaboration between professionals and families, local change, appropriate program development, and program support over time. Preparation also helped PACT participants and their colleagues develop essential skills in communication, collaboration, learning environment assessment, curricular adaptations and modifications, program planning and development, and program evaluation through coursework, seminars, summer training institutes, and on-site supervision. PACT teams were provided ongoing support and incentives to work together to develop and implement innovative and effective support services for students with disabilities. PACT evaluation procedures enabled frequent, systematic, and objective measures of program design, implementation, participant outcomes and performance to effect program changes as needed.

PACT project funds over a three-year period with an additional year no-cost extension were used to prepare a total of 38 Master's degree students to develop, implement, and monitor appropriate inclusive education programs for students with

disabilities. In addition, 34 building-level administrators and 38 colleague teachers participated in the PACT project for which the College of William and Mary provided extensive in-kind support. More specific information regarding project activities and accomplishments is provided in Section III under Project Objectives.

III. FINAL PROJECT STATUS

Progress in Meeting Project Objectives

The four main objectives of the Preparing Advanced Collaborative Teams (PACT) project were to: (a) recruit highly qualified participants: (b) prepare these education professionals to plan, deliver, and evaluate programs for students with disabilities in more inclusive settings; (c) monitor participant progress and achievement of project objectives; and (d) disseminate information regarding the PACT Project. To these ends, the following activities, accomplishments, and outcomes were achieved. Many of these activities were conducted on a yearly basis as new cohorts of students were admitted each of the respective years that the project was funded.

Objective 1: Recruit, enroll, and support highly qualified and culturally diverse students who are capable of completing an advanced, competency-based Master's program.

- The PACT grant and Resource/Collaborating Teaching Special Education Master's program were advertised in publications including newsletters in Eastern Virginia (e.g., LinkLines, circulation approximately 3,000; The Collaborator, circulation approximately 3100), flyers, letters, direct mailings to teachers, administrators, special education directors, and other instructional personnel in approximately 60 school divisions within a 90-minute radius of the College of William and Mary
- Project faculty and staff contacted and met with school administrators, special education directors, and teachers at their schools in groups and individually to advertise the program, answer questions, secure and confer on nominations of potential candidates for PACT on an ongoing basis
- Project faculty and staff provided and processed applications for the Master's Program and PACT project, selected participants, and awarded stipends on a yearly basis. The original PACT grant proposal anticipated preparation and/or support for 36 Master's students, 36 administrators, and 36 colleague teachers. A total of 41 advanced Master's students were admitted into the program and received financial support during the PACT project funding period. Twenty-one percent of these students were from typically underrepresented populations. Approximately 53% of the students were special educators; 47% were general education teachers. Three of the students who began the program dropped out for personal reasons, and were replaced by other students who received the balance of their allotted funding. In the final year of the project, grant funds were used to recruit and support additional students just beginning their master's program. Orientation meetings for PACT students were conducted on a yearly basis.
- Project faculty and staff worked closely with PACT students to recruit and select appropriate members of their school-based teams. For general educators admitted into the program, team members included an administrator and a special education teacher at their schools; for special educators, an administrator and a general

education teacher served as their teammates. Every PACT Master's student was able to enlist the support of an administrator and colleague teacher who agreed to serve on their local team. Team activities and accomplishments were recorded and shared at periodic grant meetings. A total of 34 administrators and 38 colleague teachers were recruited and served as team members (in some cases, the same administrator had more than one teacher in the PACT program which allowed more colleague teachers to be funded than the originally proposed 36).

Objective 2: Implement a comprehensive teacher preparation program that (a) ensures student proficiency in the competencies essential to effective planning, delivery, and evaluation of programs for students with disabilities in more inclusive settings and (b) engages colleague teachers and administrators in parallel experiences for skill development to create school-based support teams for meaningful change.

- During the Project period, a total of 31 students graduated from the Resource/Collaborating Teaching Master's program, and an additional 7 students who began their programs of study during this period have since graduated, having successfully met all course requirements and requirements of the PACT project. The original commitment of the grant was to prepare 36 Master's students; the actual number of students supported by the grant was greater due to providing partial support to students (n=3) who began the program but did not complete, and those who entered the program after the second year of grant funding.
- A total of 34 administrators and 38 colleague teachers received PACT support in the form of course tuition, stipends, on-site support, and/or training. Over the project period, 42 mini-grants were awarded to 21 schools to further their work toward more inclusive education for students with disabilities. These schools included 6 high schools, 9 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 3 multi-level schools.
- Each year of funding, a 2-day summer institute was planned and conducted in June for PACT students, colleague teachers, and administrators. These institutes provided opportunities for common training, team sharing of successes and challenges, and "job-alike" group discussions dealing with overcoming challenges to inclusive education at their respective school sites.
- Each year of funding, late fall and spring semester follow-up meetings to the Summer Institute were held for PACT teams to continue joint training and sharing of successful strategies for moving toward more collaboration and inclusive education in their schools. Individual school teams (12 to 14 teams per year) participated in one institute training and two follow-up meetings.
- The PACT Advisory Board met twice yearly in November and spring semester (dates varied) to provide input on program design, implementation, and evaluation.
- PACT students met with their academic advisors (Project co-directors) each semester to review progress in their programs of study and select courses for the upcoming semester.
- PACT students met monthly as a group with the Project Coordinator and/or Project Director during the semesters in which they were enrolled to share progress at their schools and to problem solve challenges they faced in moving toward more inclusive education at their respective settings.

- School teams comprised of the PACT Master's student, a colleague teacher, and an administrator met monthly at their schools, documenting team goals and objectives and progress made toward achieving them on forms copied to the Project Coordinator and Project Directors. Teams also received onsite support from the Project Coordinator and/or Clinical Supervisors who made monthly visits to the team schools.

Objective 3: Monitor and evaluate student progress and achievement of project objectives.

- Project faculty reviewed student applications and admissions twice yearly (February and October) to select the most qualified applicants for the program and project.
- PACT students met with their academic advisors (Project co-directors) each semester to review progress in their programs of study and select courses for the upcoming semester.
- Project Co-directors were informed by the School of Education Office of Academic Programs about any students receiving grades of less than a "B" in required coursework. Students receiving C's or lower were required to repeat the courses at their own expense.
- At the end of every semester during the funding period, course evaluations were collected and analyzed for required courses in the R/CT Master's Program and Internship experiences. Adjustments were made to respond to the data.
- At the summer institutes and follow-up meetings, PACT team members evaluated the strengths and areas for improvement of the PACT project; adjustments were made in the project in response to participants' evaluations to the extent possible given Master's program policies and the PACT grant proposal.
- Degree audits were made to document program completion for all graduating students.
- Exit evaluations were collected and analyzed for all graduating students and their team members. Recommendations of students, team members, Advisory Board members, and faculty were noted for potential adjustments to the R/CT Master's program and subsequent grant proposals.

Objective 4: Disseminate information regarding the PACT Project.

- Flyers and brochures were developed and mailed or distributed to school personnel in approximately 60 divisions in proximity to the College of William and Mary.
- Additional information about the project was disseminated through newsletters in Eastern Virginia (e.g., LinkLines, circulation approximately 3,000; The Collaborator, circulation approximately 3100).
- Project Co-directors disseminated information on the PACT Project at meetings held with Virginia Department of Education staff (State Council of Special Education Directors meeting), at the local superintendents' regional meeting, and at the special education directors' meeting in Superintendents Regions II and III. Project faculty also met with groups from local school divisions requesting information.
- Conference presentations on the PACT Project were made at the following national and state-level conferences of professional organizations in education:
  - Council for Exceptional Children, Charlotte, NC, 1999
  - OSEP Personnel Preparation Conference, Washington, D.C., 1999

- American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education Conference, Washington, D.C., 1999
- Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children, Savannah, GA, 1997
- Yearly presentations on the PACT Project at the Resource/Collaborating Teaching Symposium, Williamsburg, VA, (1997-1999)

- Required yearly performance reports were completed for OSERS

IV. BUDGET INFORMATION

Actual Budget Expenditures for the Reporting Period: (1/1/97-12/31/99): $419,364.00

$419,364 out of the awarded $420,576 in funds were expended as proposed in the PACT grant proposal. $1212 was returned to the USDOE funding source due to slight overestimations of need in a variety of budget categories and inability to expend these funds prior to the end of the budget period. There were no significant changes to the budget resulting from modification of project activities. Since this is the final report, there are no anticipated changes for the next budget period.